

## *Documentary*

***Using a documentary with your unit on civil rights can be powerful. It is important to view the documentary beforehand and to create guided questions based on your student's prior knowledge that can be used to accompany the documentary. Stopping to discuss difficult, emotional, and relevant undertones and vocabulary is essential.***

✚ *Nine from Little Rock: Pioneers of Desegregation* by Charles Guggenheim

Nine from Little Rock chronicles the Arkansas school integration crisis and the changes wrought in subsequent years. The film profiles the lives of the nine African-American students who integrated Little Rock Central High School during the fall of 1957. It documents the perspective of Jefferson Thomas and his fellow students seven years after their historic achievement.

**Assignment:** Not everyone harassed the Little Rock Nine, some students were bystanders—people who witness an event but are neither victims nor perpetrators (wrongdoer). What is the pain that comes from names and labels, the silence of neighbors or classmates, or “just being ignored”? How might the situation at Central High School been different if the bystanders became activist and they stood up to the unjust that was being carried out all around them.

✚ *Journey to Little Rock: The Untold Story of Minnijean Brown Trickey*

✚ *Hoxie: the Last Stand* directed by David Appleby

*Hoxie* tells the story of one of the earliest, most important, and least remembered school integration battles in the South. In the summer of 1955, the school board of a small, rural Arkansas town voluntarily desegregated its schools. The newly formed White Citizens' Councils saw this as a test for southern resistance to the Supreme Court's desegregation decision in *Brown v. the Board of Education* and soon descended on the town.

**Assignment:** The all-white five board members and the superintendent who were quickly deserted by its supporters took a stand for the law and for justice. Have you ever taken a stand against injustice? If so, explain the outcome and how the incident impacted you. If not, do you have the courage to stand up against injustice, explain?

✚ *The Clinton 12* by Keith McDaniel

✚ *The Lost Year: The Untold Story of the Year Following the Crisis at Central High School 1958-1959* by Sandra Hubbard

The school year following the “Crisis at Central High” of 1957-1958 is considered by many to be the untold story of the Little Rock Desegregation Crisis. In the fall of 1958 all four high schools in Little Rock were closed to avoid integration again. More than 3,600 black and white students were locked out of their high schools, with no education available from their

public school district for one entire school year. Students and teachers from Hall High, Central High, Horace Mann and Little Rock Technical School all suffered under this decision. Parents were scrambling to find schools for their teenagers. Temporary classes were being taught on television. Many students transferred to schools in other cities and states, leaving family members and friends. Strangely, the football programs continued.

**Assignment:** Think about denied access, which is a form of discrimination. Choose one of the following:


- Write an essay describing the impact on a community if its high schools closed (consider both the negative and positive impact). Explain what you would do if you were not allowed to attend school.
- Share your experience with and opinions about discrimination. What do you think should be done to end discrimination?
- Create a service-learning project for the class, school, or community to reduce discrimination at the local level.

 *Mighty Times: the Children's March* directed by Robert Hudson

*The Children's March* tells the story of how the young people of Birmingham, Alabama, braved fire hoses and police dogs in 1963 and brought segregation to its knees. Their heroism complements discussions about the ability of today's young people to be catalysts for positive social change.

**Assignment:** Click on the following link <http://www.tolerance.org/activity/virtue-being-human-human-rights-question>. After completing the survey, write an essay answering the following question:

- How can young people in your town be a catalyst for change?
- Compare your essay to a classmate's. Are the issues and problems you list the same or different from your classmate's? Why?

 *The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till* directed by Keith A. Beauchamp

Emmett Till's life was cut short when in August 1955, Mamie Till-Mobley of Chicago sent her only child, 14-year-old Emmett Louis Till, to visit relatives in Mississippi Delta. Little did she know that only eight days later, Emmett would be abducted from his Great-Uncles' home, brutally beaten and murdered for one of the oldest Southern taboos: whistling at a white woman in public.

**Assignment:** How do the choices people make, individually and collectively, shape a society? Use examples from *The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till*.

### *Mendez vs. Westminster* a PBS documentary

As early as 1913 Mexicans were segregated from whites in school, public pools, restaurants, housing, and denied access to owning property. Before *Brown vs. Board of Education*, Gonzalo Mendez questioned segregation in California when his children were denied access to their neighborhood school. In the *Mendez vs. Westminster* case their attorney argued that segregation was awful and it made Mexican children feel inferior. In addition, the attorney presented the courts with expert witnesses that argued Mexican children would not learn English and would have a difficult time becoming American. After the success of the Mendez case of 1947, one year later California repealed its laws against segregation against both Asian and Native Americans.

**Assignment:** Choose one of the following:

- Create 10 interview questions in preparation of interviewing: Sylvia Mendez, Jerome Mendez, or Gonzalo Mendez, Jr. Your questions can surround how life was like for their parents under segregation, their parents' involvement in helping to integrate public schools in California, and their feelings and opinions of their parents' success against all odds.
- Jerome Mendez states “kids forget quick” after watching the documentary describe what Jerome means by the statement. Do you agree or disagree with his opinion, “kids forget quickly”? Explain your answer.
- Research the history of LULAC. Is there a LULAC in your community? Is LULAC an organization that you would be interested in joining? Why or why not?

### *February One*

Based largely on firsthand accounts and rare archival footage, *February One* documents one volatile winter in Greensboro, North Carolina, that not only challenged public accommodation customs and state laws, but also served as a blueprint for the wave of non-violent civil rights protest that swept across the South and the nation throughout the 1960's.

**Assignment:** A Study Guide is available at  
<http://www.februaryonedocumentary.com/studyguide.html>

### *The Souls of Black Girls*

A provocative news documentary that questions whether or not women of color are suffering from a self-image disorder as a result of media images--a piece that also attempts to provoke honest dialogue and critical thinking among women of color about media images and their present condition—internally and externally.

**Assignment:**

 *What's Race Got to Do With it?*

Many students today, born in the post-Civil Rights era, believe that race is no longer an issue or feel that they've heard it all before. But despite more than 15 years of diversity programs and initiatives, campuses are still struggling to close achievement gaps, reduce racial disparities and enhance student success for everyone. *What's Race Got to Do with it?* chronicles the experience of a new generation of college students—in this case over the course of 16 weeks of intergroup dialogue on the U.C. Berkeley campus. As they confront themselves and each other about race, they discover they often lack awareness of how important their experience of campus life is from their peers, to the detriment of an inclusive campus climate.

**Assignment:** Toolkit and Facilitator's Guide is available at <http://www.whatsrace.org/>